

PROFESSIONALLY YOU

“Successful Job Interview techniques”

FAMILY ECONOMICS & FINANCIAL
EDUCATION

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After all your hard work to land an interview, from writing your resume to identifying the right opportunity, the worse thing which could happen is to make a poor impression to a potential employer.

THANK YOU NOTES

Thank you notes should be used throughout the interview process. They demonstrate to the potential employer a person is courteous, thoughtful, and well mannered. They help an individual stand out from the crowd of applicants for a specific job.

1 Etiquette Tip:

On how to stand out from all the other applicants... Write a thank you note immediately following the interview.

The thank you note should be sent the day after the interview. It should thank the interviewer, first and foremost, for his/her time and interest. Let the potential employer know that the interview reaffirmed your interest in and enthusiasm for the position, and you are confident there is a good fit between your skills, experience, and the needs of the organization. If you neglected to discuss some of your qualifications during the interview, the thank you letter is the golden opportunity to bring them to the interviewer's attention.

The most professional approach to thank you notes is to type them in a business letter format. Just like your resume and cover letter, it should be printed on 100% cotton fiber paper.

PHONE ETIQUETTE

- Create a professional image on your answering machine. Do not have music, jokes, etc. Be sure the caller knows he/she has reached the correct number by having your name or number on the message.
- Be sure everyone answering the phone knows you are job hunting and to take good phone messages.
- Keep a phone log to know which companies you have spoken to and when.



TOUGH INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

How did you like your last employer?

- Never criticize a former employer in an interview. You might express appreciation for what you learned in that job. If pressed as to why you left, an appropriate answer can refer to your leaving "to pursue a new challenging opportunity."

What kind of people "rub you the wrong way?"

- This is not the time to get into personal likes and dislikes. The interviewer really wants to see if you get along well with most people. A good answer may be you generally liked everyone with whom you have worked.

What are your major weaknesses?

- The best approach is to list a few "weaknesses" which are actually advantages such as: being impatient to get things done, needing to produce a quality end product, or having a tendency to take your work too seriously. Another approach is to talk about weaknesses you have already overcome.

What made you apply for this job?

- Be ready to cite several reasons why you think your current level of skill and interest help qualify you for the position. Provide several reasons why you are particularly interested in this position.

Where do you hope to be 10 years from now?

- You should have a feel for the direction you want to take in your career. A good answer is that you seek the opportunity to show how well you can perform and hope to go as far as dedication to the job and working intelligently will carry you.

What are the most satisfying and frustrating aspects of your current job?

- The answer provides insight into what makes the applicant tick. Is the candidate result oriented? Be careful what you say and never criticize co-workers.



DRESS FOR SUCCESS

The Top

When entering an interview, a person should walk in confidently, make eye contact, and immediately shake the potential employers' hand. Therefore, the head is where most people make their initial impression. Here are a few tips...

A potential employer has developed a perception of you within the first 12 seconds. How would you like to be remembered and perceived?

Your hair...

- Have a well groomed, conservative haircut. For women, this means no large, colored, or teased styles. For men, this means no tails, braids, or colors.
- Men should make sure facial hair is neatly groomed.
- Keep hair away from your face. You do not want the interviewer to be distracted if you have to continually be pushing your hair away from your face.

Your face...

- Women should wear a conservative amount of make up which accentuates their features: no bright lipsticks, blushes, or too much eye makeup.
- Practice good oral hygiene.

*"Good
Clothes
Open All
Doors."*

The Middle

This quote may not be completely true, however the right clothes do make a statement to a potential employer. Having the proper style of clothing, in the right color, is essential when interviewing.



DRESS FOR SUCCESS, CONT.

What is professional dress?

- Professional dress depends upon the job a person is interviewing for. A general rule is to be one step above the required attire for the company. If most people wear slacks and a sport shirt, wear slacks with a coat and tie. Everyone in a coat and tie? Wear a suit. Everyone in a suit, wear your best suit.

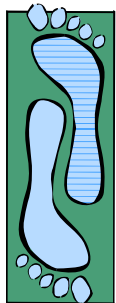


Attire for professional jobs...

- Men should be in a dark colored (navy blue or charcoal) suit. The shirt should be a solid colored white, cream, or light blue. The tie should compliment the entire outfit, not be too bright or loud and extend to the trouser belt.
- Women should be in a dark colored (navy blue, dark brown, or charcoal) skirt suit. The skirt should be no more than two inches above the knee.
- Make sure your clothing is well fitted to your body style. If it is too tight or too loose—don't wear it!
- Try on your outfit, and set out all accessories the day before the interview. You don't want to have forgotten anything.
- Make sure your clothing is well pressed.

The Bottom (your feet)

The shoes a person wears are an important part of the finished professional look. They should enhance the outfit.



- Make sure they are comfortable. If they are brand new, wear them around the house to break them in.
- They should look new, not worn. Make sure they are well polished.
- Men should wear black or brown leather dress shoes.
- Women should be in 1-2 inch pumps matching their outfit, usually in black brown or navy. Open toed and sling back shoes are not acceptable.

COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Tell me about yourself.
- Will you relocate?
- What motivates you?
- What can you do for us?
- How do you work under pressure?
- What are your three greatest accomplishments thus far in your career?
- What are your strengths/weaknesses?
- Give an example of your leadership skills.
- How do you interact with co-workers?
- How do you motivate people?
- In what way do you feel you can make the biggest contribution to this company?
- Why are you changing fields?
- What direct supervisory experience have you had?
- How would you describe your ideal boss?
- How do you define cooperation?
- What would you do to improve our company and how?
- How do you define success?
- What is the most difficult assignment you have completed?
- What is the most rewarding assignment you have completed?
- What did you like best about your past/present job?
- Has your job performance ever been appraised?

An interview is a two way process. The employer is not only interviewing the applicant, but the applicant is interviewing the employer. For the applicant, the interview is the opportunity to sell him or herself to the employer as the most qualified person for the job. It is also an opportunity to learn more about the job and if the company is a good fit and a place the applicant would enjoy working.

DURING THE INTERVIEW

- When entering the room, immediately greet your interviewers by name with a firm handshake, make eye contact, and smile.
- Be self-confident, alert, interested, and relaxed. Do not be glancing at your watch!
- Be genuine.
- Do not smoke or chew gum.
- Maintain good eye contact with everyone in the room.
- Use good posture—sit up straight in the chair. If women choose to cross their legs, do so at the ankle.
- Listen closely to what the interviewer is saying.
- Be articulate, do not use slang.
- Before answering a question, take time to pause and plan an adequate response. This helps a person to avoid nervous rambling.
- Keep responses positive.
- Give examples to questions by stating situations, actions, and results when answering questions.
- If you don't know the answer simply state "I do not know the answer to that question but would be happy to get back to you."
- Answer each question completely letting the employer know what your strengths are and what you could provide to the company.
- Have a few well researched questions ready to ask the company. The questions should demonstrate your knowledge of the company.
- If salary is discussed, know the ballpark salary offered and what you feel comfortable asking for.
- Keep your personal life private. Do not answer illegal questions such as marital status or age.



DRESS FOR SUCCESS, CONT.

Everything in Between

Accessories are used to set the tone creating a finished, professional look.

Jewelry

- The jewelry should be very conservative and simple. A person should wear no more than eight pieces total. Men should not wear earrings. If a women only one ring per hand.

Cologne/Perfume/Scented Lotions

- Little, if any. You don't want people to smell you coming before they see you. You never know if the interviewer is sensitive or allergic to certain smells and would end up focusing on how you smell instead of what you are saying.

Socks/Panty Hose

- Men should wear dress socks matching their slacks and shoes. Make sure the dress sock is long enough skin does not show when the candidate is seated.
- Women should wear a basic color of panty hose which matches their shoes. This is often brown, off black, taupe, or flesh tone.

Fingernails

- Fingernails should be clean and neatly trimmed.
- Women should have a moderate length, with no designs and conservative polish. Clear is best.

Belts

- A belt should be worn which matches the shoes.

Notebook

- Individuals should carry a leather notebook which contains copies of his/her resume, cover letter, job application, references, professional pen and paper for note taking.

Your attention to detail in grooming yourself reflects how you'd attend to detail on the job.

SCOUT IT OUT

There are several reasons to pay a visit to a company before you have the interview.

- You will know how to get there and how long it takes.
- You will see how people in the office dress.
- You will meet the receptionist and learn his/her name. This is a good person to ask any questions you may have about the company.
- You can pick up any literature on the company that may be provided in the reception area: annual report, sales brochures, newsletters, etc.

BE ON TIME!



There are no exceptions to this rule! If necessary, perform a trial run to see how long it takes to get to the destination. If any unforeseen emergency arises, call as soon as possible: apologize, explain, and offer to reschedule. Arrange to arrive ten to fifteen minutes early.

Arriving early allows a person to find a restroom before the interview begins. This allows a person time to take a deep breath, comb his/her hair, refresh any makeup, and check clothing.

RESEARCH THE COMPANY

Because the interview is the most important part of the job search, it is something that requires research and practice to ensure success. A successful applicant is someone who has thoroughly researched the company, practiced answering common interview questions, and has developed potential questions they would like to ask the interviewer. Someone who is well prepared is more confident during the interview and lets the interviewer know he/she is very interested in the company.

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

- Learn the interview format. How long will it be, will you be dining, who will you be meeting with?
- Practice, Practice, Practice!

IN THE WAITING ROOM

Even though the receptionist or secretary may not be part of the formal interview process, these employees often influence hiring decisions. If he or she notices rude or unprofessional behavior in the reception area while you're waiting to be interviewed, most likely that information will be passed on to the interviewer after you leave. Introduce yourself to the receptionist and give your name. "Hi, my name is Mary Smith. I have a 10 o'clock interview with Jane Doe." Make a note of the receptionist's name and thank him/her for his/her assistance. Things *not* to do while waiting include:

- Ignoring the receptionist's attempts to talk to you.
- Bringing someone with you.
- Smoking, eating, or chewing gum.
- Asking to use the phone.
- Listening to a walkman or portable stereo.
- Reading a book or magazine of poor taste.
- Applying makeup or brushing your hair.
- Pestering or distracting employees as they pass through.

THE HANDSHAKE



"Stand up straight, look them in the eye, say their name, and give them a firm handshake."

A handshake is a good indicator of how confident you are. It should be firm (but don't crush the person's hand). Give a full handshake, not just one where you grasp the other person's fingers. Be sure to look the other person in the eye, say their name, and smile while giving a handshake.